

## **CITY OF MILWAUKEE HOUSING STRATEGY**

Updated September 20, 2001

### **GOAL: CREATE DIVERSE HOUSING CHOICES**

#### **Strategic Objectives:**

- Promote development of market-rate housing throughout the city.
- Add 500 new downtown and near downtown housing units per year.
- Add 100 new market-rate housing units per year in non-downtown areas.
- Work with Community Development Corporations and private developers to rehab and sell 100 units per year.
- Add 100 new housing units per year in the block grant area.
- Provide and maintain high-quality public housing.
- Increase home ownership.

#### **Benchmarks:**

- Number of new housing units
- Number of rehabbed housing units
- Equalized value of residential property
- Percentage of home ownership

#### **Issue Synopsis:**

The availability of affordable, quality housing is inextricably connected to economic development and the ultimate health of the city. The lack of stable housing can impact an employer's ability to hire and retain workers. This increases the cost of doing business, negatively impacts a company's profitability and can affect the community's economic health. Conversely, preservation and expansion of the housing stock grows the tax base, attracts commerce, and demonstrates the health of neighborhood marketplaces. Additional economic benefits include the jobs, materials and services generated by the construction, marketing and sale of housing and the spending power brought by new residents.

While Milwaukee must ensure affordable housing, it must also strengthen its position as the place of choice for middle and upper income families and individuals. To accomplish this, housing in all styles and at all price points must be available. Diversity of housing allows people of different ages, cultures, races and incomes to live in each neighborhood. This helps achieve a balanced and stable housing market.

To achieve the goal of creating diverse housing choices, strategies must be developed to address the need for new housing as well as the need for rehabilitation and preservation of existing structures. But these strategies must look beyond housing alone. Neighborhoods are comprised of interdependent building blocks. Housing, commercial centers, transportation, cultural and entertainment amenities, schools and perceptions of safety all affect the desirability of a neighborhood. It is essential to maintain and improve all of the parts. Each neighborhood must be viewed and assessed as a whole, to determine

what must be done to facilitate revitalization and growth. Promoting the preservation and development of housing in the City does more than keep neighborhoods healthy. Milwaukee's many historic homes are central to the unique character of its neighborhoods. Preservation of existing housing also allows the city to maintain affordable housing stock. Maintaining and creating urban housing choices helps curb sprawl. The attraction of jobs and new housing development to Milwaukee, the urban center, can curtail spiraling transportation expenditures. It can have a positive impact on pollution emissions and the environment.

**Strategy 1: Increase and target new housing production that contributes to Milwaukee's unique urban landscape.**

**Action Plan:**

1. Utilize comprehensive planning in the development and redevelopment of neighborhoods.
2. Promote market-rate housing.
3. Set annual production goals citywide.
4. Support environmentally friendly construction and encourage high-quality, cost-effective building styles, methods and materials.
5. Cluster housing development efforts to provide incentive for increased investment including commercial development.
6. Assemble, prepare and market sites for new residential development.
7. Use selective intensive code enforcement and demolition based on neighborhood strategy to remove blighting or obsolete properties and make room for new development.
8. Facilitate the development process for residential developers.
9. Develop systems to allow tracking of all housing development, public and private, on a citywide basis.

**Strategy 2: Promote preservation of existing housing stock.**

**Action Plan:**

1. Develop additional resources for the maintenance and rehabilitation of housing.
2. Assist in the creation of partnerships with developers and lenders to implement programs that upgrade Milwaukee's housing stock.
3. Preserve and enhance the unique features of neighborhoods.
4. Offer a wide variety of enforcement and incentive services based on needs of the individual neighborhoods.

**Strategy 3: Support and encourage diversity (income, race, lifestyle, etc.) in all housing in the city -- both neighborhoods and downtown.**

**Action Plan:**

1. Obtain, analyze and distribute residential market data that will assist in understanding neighborhood housing markets and formulating housing strategies.

2. Guide policy and development decisions to assure a mix of housing options for all residents.
3. Promote fair housing principles in the community.
4. Maintain affordable housing while encouraging higher-end market rate housing in neighborhoods to avoid gentrification and economic segregation.

**Strategy 4: Provide public housing and community service programs that strengthen and enhance the social, economic and physical environment, especially for those of lower income.**

**Action Plan:**

1. Maximize and manage federal housing dollars to ensure decent, safe and sanitary public housing, including veterans housing.
2. Develop mixed-income housing at public housing developments and other neighborhoods throughout the city.
3. Adapt public housing for elderly assisted living.
4. Provide home-based services for the elderly so they can age in-place.
5. Help residents acquire the skills needed to increase their income and become homeowners.
6. Coordinate services to help Section 8 participants become self-sufficient.
7. Continue to explore partnership ventures.
8. Develop a plan to reduce the density and isolation in all public housing developments.
9. Reduce the vacancy rate in the HACM high-rise developments.
10. Help M/W/DBE businesses diversify their revenue and provide contracting opportunities for emerging businesses.
11. Support the development and maintenance of affordable rental units, especially for large families.
12. Advocate for an increase in the number of rental-assisted housing units in areas that are currently underserved throughout the entire metropolitan area.

**Strategy 5: Maximize and utilize all available resources, including state, federal and private dollars, to carry out the city's housing strategy.**

**Action Plan:**

1. Coordinate housing and neighborhood development efforts with CDBG funded activities as well as other human service and economic development initiatives.
2. Cluster the city's economic development activities in catalytic project areas that have demonstrated strong capacity to make a clear and measurable impact.
3. Expand the pool of private resources available for investment in neighborhood development.
4. Work with lenders to ensure the availability of mortgage products (including mixed-use developments) for rehabilitation of housing (both owner occupied and rental) and historic restoration.
5. Work within areas to build capacity.
  - Work with Alderpersons to help organize businesses and residents.

- Provide a ‘road map’ for groups that will help them develop and demonstrate capacity.
  - Create forums for on-going and regular communication with area stakeholders.
  - Develop additional resources such as business associations, BIDs, TINs, and other neighborhood groups.
  - Involve the community in identifying and addressing nuisance and drug activity.
6. Support and strengthen the ability of Community Development Corporations to perform effectively as vehicles for neighborhood renewal.
  7. Develop cooperative relationships with parties involved in the housing delivery system including (but not limited to) the Department of Neighborhood Services, neighborhood residents, property owners, lending institutions, and the real estate industry--including WHEDA, fair housing council, HUD, CBGA, UWM and the Marquette housing institute to name a few.
  8. Aggressively monitor and promote legislative changes on the local, state and federal level that will positively advance the City of Milwaukee housing and neighborhood development objectives.
  9. Develop mechanisms to track and assess the effectiveness of investments in rehab, maintenance and new housing production.

**Strategy 6: Aggressively market Milwaukee for in-fill and new housing development.**

**Action Plan:**

1. Develop marketing materials to encourage private development and investment in housing.
2. Seek out and promote conversion and mixed-use opportunities, including live- work, throughout the city.
3. Highlight “best practice” models of residential construction to encourage and facilitate new residential infill development.
4. Work with community partners to market and promote awareness of housing opportunities in Milwaukee.
5. Develop a plan to strategically dispose of in-rem and City-owned lots.
6. Address the use of spot acquisition funds to help achieve housing development goals.

**Strategy 7: Promote home ownership and responsible rental property ownership.**

**Action Plan:**

1. Work with partners in the housing delivery system to create a comprehensive citywide marketing plan to promote homeownership and responsible rental property ownership.
  - Work with partners (e.g., lenders, counseling agencies, Select Milwaukee) to create a clearinghouse for information on homeownership and resources for homeownership.
  - Encourage employers to promote and contribute to employee homeownership in the City.

- Market opportunities and increase resources for neighborhood resident ownership of rental properties (e.g., Buy in Your Neighborhood)
  - Continue working with community organizations, block clubs, the Citywide Housing Coalition and others to encourage responsible rental property ownership (e.g. neighborhood property surveys, identification of purchase opportunities for neighborhood residents)
2. Work in partnership with the lending community to develop additional funding sources for the maintenance and rehabilitation of owner-occupied housing and the purchase and rehabilitation of rental properties.
  3. Expand homeownership opportunities for Housing Authority and Section 8 residents through the 5H and voucher programs.
  4. Explore the feasibility of a Home Equity Assurance Program.
  5. Provide training programs that teach property owners effective property management practices and how to reduce the incidence of illegal activities on their properties.
    - Support continued funding of the landlord training program, increase marketing and outreach efforts.
    - Link attendance at landlord training program with public and private financing programs.
    - Work with representatives from the rental property management industry such as BOMA and AASEW to develop and promote effective property management practices.
  6. Coordinate activities with the private and nonprofit sectors to develop property management capacity.
  7. Ensure City ordinances requiring landlords to maintain properties in a decent, safe and sanitary condition are enforced.
    - Work with MPD to enforce quality of life ordinances such as the Nuisance Noise Ordinance and the Chronic Nuisance property ordinance.
  8. Work with partners and other City Departments to address issues (including problem behavior) that affect quality of life in City neighborhoods.
    - Work with DPW on issues such as litter abatement, infrastructure and traffic.
    - Work with the Health Department to address neighborhood health issues such as lead abatement.